

Silence.

When smitten, thou didst feel the rod;
Be still, and leave thy cause with God,
And silence to thy soul shall teach
Far more than came with outward speech.

When secret arts and open foe
Conspire thy peace to overthrow,
In silence learn the hidden power
Which saves thee in that bitter hour.

Doth not thy Father take thy part—
Doth he not know thy bleeding heart;
And when it seems as thou wilt fall,
Does he not feel it—bear it all?

Make no reply, but let thy mind
In silent faith the triumph find,
Which comes from injuries forgiven,
And trust in God and strength in heaven.

—Sel.

The Apocalypse.

BY J. B. LAIR.

There is nothing as important to man as a proper knowledge of the scriptures, and there is no fact more potent than this—that people can not get a proper knowledge of them without study.

The divine arrangement is such that man must study if he would get a proper understanding. The scriptures were largely given allegorically, and there was a purpose in it. Give a man a fortune in money and he seldom keeps it. But the man that makes the fortune appreciates it and keeps it.

Just so with the man studying the scriptures. If by much labor and study he gets knowledge, he is then not a forgetful hearer, but a doer as well. Give a child money and let him expend it extravagantly, it will never appreciate it. But give the same child a chance to earn the money, and mark the change in the disposition. Tell a man all you know and let him commit it all to memory, so that seemingly he knows it as well as you do. Leave him for a few months and then see how much he knows. He has forgotten it. Why? Because he had not earned it, had not studied it. By studying the scriptures we do not only get ideas for ourselves, but we become qualified to retain them.

I would probably not dare say that it is impossible for a man to have faith and hope without studying the scriptures, but if it is a fact that knowledge is only acquired by study, I might dare say it with safety, for I can not conceive how any one can have faith in anything and hope for anything, without having a knowledge of it. With these facts before us, it becomes apparent what the first duty is.

The first duty of the teacher is to impart knowledge. Impart it in such a way, if possible, that the taught will become interested, for without the proper interest on the part of the hearer, the imparting of knowledge is of little account to the hearer, for if taken it is not retained.

Then the first duty of the taught, or hearer, is to get knowledge, then faith, then they are ready for every good work. As a rule, a minute or detailed delineation of a subject is the best to give by the teacher, especially to those that are not apt to learn or not easily interested. But often an outline of a subject will lead some to investigate and get out the details. And this is the way I purpose to treat this subject—give only some outlines, for the details would make volumes.

The Apocalypse, or Revelation is to most people the direct contrary of what the word implies. Instead of a revelation, it is the darkest enigma that men can encounter; and I have a notion to say that it is all for the want of a general understanding of the scriptures. Any person, by reading Daniel's visions and John's revelations will see that they saw the same things. Daniel's visions covered a period of time from the days of Nebuchadnezzar—the first universal kingdom—or from 600 years before Christ to the ushering in of his (Christ's) kingdom on earth. I would remark here that there are four universal kingdoms embraced in this period.

1, The Assyrian. 2, The Medo-Persian. 3, The Grecian. 4, The Roman. "And in the days

of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Dan. 2: 44.

Daniel saw what should transpire from his day until the setting up of Christ's temporal kingdom. John saw from his day until the millennium—which means the same thing.

Daniel's visions cover a period of nearly 3000 years, and delineates the political condition of the world, while John's revelations cover a period of about 2000 years, and defines the religious condition of the world.

The "seven vials," the "seven trumpets," the "seven plagues," etc., of the Revelation are not a wonderful phenomenon to be visited upon the world in a very short period of time. And the "seven churches" should not be confined to a local application. While there doubtless were "seven churches" in Asia Minor, and their several conditions are stated in the narrative, they have a much broader application, for when we acquaint ourselves with the history of the past and present religious condition of the world, we readily comprehend that the several conditions of the "seven churches" applies to equal periods and conditions of the church during the time that has elapsed from the giving of the Revelations to this time. And in the meantime the "seven vials" have been and are being poured out. The "seven plagues" have been and are being administered, and the "seven thunders" have and are "uttering their voices," and the "seven seals" at the same time have and are being opened. I use the present tense, for the reasons that while we are in the seventh and last of the periods, they are not yet complete.

We are in the seventh or Laodicean condition of the church—or probably it would be more proper to say of the world—and fit only to be "spewed out"—done away, to make place for a new dispensation. This condition Christ had in view when he said, "how hardly should he find faith when he came."

The "seventh seal is being unloosed, and the declaration of the "angel which stood upon the sea and upon the earth" "that there should be time no longer," (Rev. 10: 5, 6) is rapidly drawing to fulfillment. That "there should be time no longer" certainly does not imply that the universe should cease to exist, but the reference is to the present state of things—that they should cease to be. The present dispensation should give place to another—to the new. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isa. 2: 3, and Micah 4: 2.

It is always necessary to get a general understanding of the subject in order to get out the details, and to those who are favored with the history of the world can readily understand them in general.

There is no greater error than to think, as some do, that the "plagues" and "vials" and "soundings" are wonderful phenomena to be "poured out" on the world all at once and yet to be done. For the proposition was in the opening of the Apocalypse "to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." Rev. 1: 1. "For the time is at hand." 3rd v. These things were not only "shortly to come to pass," but "the time was at hand" for their beginning, and the history of the world proves that the things narrated by John began almost immediately to transpire.

I would remark here that many people think that there is but little of importance connected with the Revelations relative to our salvation, but if that be true, why the expression "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein." Rev. 1: 3. A better rendering, however, is this: "Blessed is he that knows accurately, and they who give heed to the words of the prophecy and narrowly observe the things which have been written in it, for the time is near." Now if there is no importance attached to the Apocalypse, why is there blessedness promised those who know accurately and "give heed to the things that are written therein."

There can be but one reason, and that is this: If we get a proper understanding of the Revelations, we arrive at the time, approximately, of Christ's second coming, for which he has told us to watch. There is great importance attached to the coming of Christ and his kingdom all through the scriptures, and if Revelations does not reveal this, it comes far short of its purpose. The fault, however, is not with the Revelations, but it is with us, and the trouble with us is simply this: we will not believe. This may be a strong assertion, but true nevertheless. Few, very few people understand it. Why? Because they do not study it, and the reason they do not study it is because they have been wrongly taught and made believe that it is too mysterious to be understood. And if some one does study it and can elucidate it, people will then not believe. Because they do not understand, they think others do not either.

If it is a fact that our happiness or blessedness depends on our knowledge—which it does according to 1: 3. It is very necessary that we do "know accurately" the things that are written in the prophecies. But just so long as we adhere to some of the modern expositions of this prophecy, just so long we will be kept in darkness and in ignorance; but if ignorance is bliss in this particular, 'tis folly to be wise.

I shall refer to only a few of the modern wrong expositions for examples; viz. Rev. 1: 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," etc. We are told this "Lord's day" means the first day of the week, or what some people erroneously call the Sabbath. Now what could the day of the week have to do with this vision? It is not known what day of the week John saw his vision, and what does it matter as to the time. I cannot conceive that he was telling what day of the week it was, but what he is telling is this: He saw a vision. He was in the Spirit, and he was carried in the Spirit down to the "Lord's day," to the time when the Lord would come and reign over all the earth. When the Lord would accomplish full redemption in the earth, when Satan would be bound, and the Lord's kingdom would be supreme in the earth. This is what John saw—the Lord's day in the earth, without any reference to the day of the week.

But the most abused verse of all is the 7th verse of the 12th chapter. There could be nothing more erroneous than the idea of war—real conflict in heaven where God dwells. And yet this is the teaching and generally accepted. And there is a class of teachers who undertake to tell the cause of the war. They say it was pride, yes, *pride*, that caused war, conflict in heaven among the angels. Just think—heaven, the *fountain head of peace and love and consummate happiness* and yet a battlefield, where these peaceable, lovable, and happy beings defile its purity with their carnage. I would prefer that my tongue should cleave to the roof of my mouth and refuse to utter a word, and that my "right hand should forget its cunning" and fall palsied to my side, than to disseminate such absurd things as these false teachers parade before an unsuspecting public. Such teaching is absurd for several reasons, a few of which I shall mention.

1st. It is contrary to the nature of divine things. It is little short of blasphemy to think that God who is love, and the angels who are little less, should have war in that blissful abode where there is forever joy and peace. Talk about impossibilities. That would be one. It would be a violation of God's own nature to invade those sacred precincts with conflict. Then we must locate the war elsewhere, which we can do in accordance with the nature of things, and I assign as the 2nd reason that there is a literal heaven and figurative heaven. This distinction we find all through the scriptures, most prominent in Isa. 1: 2, viz. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken." No one supposes for a moment that the literal heavens or earth have ears or could hear, or that the Lord would address inanimate things. But he was addressing the figurative heavens (the rulers) and the figurative earth (the people), and here is where the war was in heaven, was among the rulers of the people, or was to be in the future from John's day. And this I submit as the 3d reason against a war—the literal heaven. All that St. John saw was future, for he sent and signified